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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING
ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE
ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections

Report of the Secretary-General

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 4	2
II. IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS 48/131 AND 49/190	5 - 20	3
A. Consolidation of electoral assistance capacities and coordination of activities	5 - 8	3
B. Coordination with other organizations	9 - 15	4
C. Ongoing activities	16 - 20	5
III. UNITED NATIONS EXPERIENCE	21 - 25	6
A. Major United Nations missions	21 - 22	6
B. Support for international observers	23	7
C. Technical assistance and advisory services	24 - 25	7
IV. REFLECTIONS FOR FUTURE ACTIVITY	26 - 29	7
<u>Annex.</u> Status of Member States' requests as of 17 October 1995		9

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report has been prepared in response to a request by the General Assembly for the Secretary-General to report to it at its fiftieth session on the implementation of resolutions 48/131 of 20 December 1983 and 49/190 of 23 December 1994, particularly on the status of requests from Member States for electoral assistance and verification and on his efforts to enhance the Organization's support of the democratization process in Member States.

2. The information provided in the present report addresses three primary issues: (a) the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 48/131 and 49/190; (b) a brief discussion of United Nations experience in electoral assistance over the past year; and (c) reflections on future activities. More specific details on the status of requests and a country-by-country overview of electoral assistance activities during the past year are provided in the annex to the report.

3. Several new trends in requests for electoral assistance are becoming apparent. Fewer large-scale verification missions, such as the Nicaraguan elections in 1989, will be required. In contrast, demand is increasing for smaller and more economical forms of electoral assistance, such as technical assistance and the provision of coordination and support for international observers. The focus of international efforts is shifting from short-term preoccupation with the events of a particular election day to more longer-term considerations related to the development and strengthening of electoral institutions and processes. In this context, additional efforts are being made to enhance cooperation with other international, governmental and non-governmental organizations in order to facilitate more comprehensive and need-specific responses to requests for electoral assistance.

4. The provision of electoral assistance is undertaken only on the basis of a formal request from the Government concerned. In response, the Electoral Assistance Division in the Department of Political Affairs advises the focal point as to the most appropriate action to be taken. All requests are given serious consideration; however, in some cases the Division may recommend against a United Nations role, particularly if its contribution is considered primarily symbolic, the lead time too short or the electoral context inappropriate. As stated in previous reports, electoral assistance should ultimately be a limited service provided by the United Nations in cases where national capacity requires external short-term support. The purpose of electoral assistance is to assist Governments in achieving their own full capacity as soon as possible.

II. IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS 48/131
AND 49/190

A. Consolidation of electoral assistance capacities
and coordination of activities

5. In July 1995, managerial responsibility for the Electoral Assistance Division was returned from the Department of Peace-keeping Operations to the Department of Political Affairs. This decision was taken in view of the expected fall in the number of large-scale peace-keeping missions with an electoral component. During the past year, Haiti has been the only such case. Based on recent experience, the activities of the Division will focus increasingly on a high volume of smaller electoral assistance missions unrelated to peace-keeping.

6. As a consequence, the Secretary-General appointed Mr. Marrack Goulding, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to serve as the new focal point for United Nations electoral assistance activities. All requests for electoral assistance should now be forwarded to Mr. Goulding. As in the past, the focal point will recommend to the Secretary-General, with the technical support of the Electoral Assistance Division, the most appropriate United Nations response to requests for electoral assistance.

7. Cooperation on electoral assistance activities by various units within the United Nations system has continued to be effective. Primary partners include the Department for Development Support and Management Services and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), particularly its Management Development and Governance Division. UNDP resident coordinators and representatives frequently provide critical background and support to electoral assistance efforts and are instrumental in arranging the necessary financing for such projects. United Nations Volunteers have demonstrated their dedication and professional excellence in a variety of missions; they will be a valuable resource for the staffing of future electoral assistance missions. The United Nations Centre for Human Rights continues to provide essential advisory services in its field of expertise.

8. In the report of November 1994 (A/49/675 and Corr.1), several plans for the systematic retrieval and utilization of the experience of past missions were discussed. Some of those proposals, particularly the maintenance of close contact with field missions, have been implemented. Others, particularly the preparation of mission guidelines and technical handbooks, have been delayed, largely due to the priority which must necessarily be given to requests for assistance from Member States. Because the timing of such requests is difficult to predict, the workload of the Division must be adjusted constantly as new requests for assistance are received. The preparation of guidelines and handbooks, and the proposed organization of workshops for electoral consultants, are secondary priorities, to be undertaken in periods when the demand for priority outputs is low. In 1995, an increased workload, together with the secondment of two officers of the Electoral Assistance Division to Haiti and other field missions, left little time available for such long-term projects. It is hoped that this situation will be remedied in 1996.

B. Coordination with other organizations

9. Coordination of United Nations electoral assistance activities with those of other organizations has continued to be effective and beneficial to both the receiving Governments and the organizations providing assistance. Over the past year, particular progress was made in strengthening cooperative arrangements with regional organizations. Two recent experiences, with the Organization of American States (OAS) in Haiti and with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Armenia, have demonstrated the positive results of such cooperation for the requesting Government, the assisting organizations and the relevant donors. It is hoped that such cooperation will be further developed with these and other organizations in future missions.

10. In Haiti, over the past year, the United Nations and OAS have shared in the provision of electoral assistance by dividing between them the responsibilities for assisting the conduct of the electoral process and for international observation, respectively. At the request of the Government of Haiti, the United Nations provided an electoral assistance team to assist the Haitian Provisional Electoral Council in establishing the necessary infrastructure for the conduct of parliamentary and local elections. The International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH), a joint operation of the United Nations and OAS, monitored important human rights aspects of the electoral campaign, such as freedoms of speech and association. OAS took responsibility for organizing and deploying international observers for the elections, recruiting observers primarily from among OAS staff. However, MICIVIH provided supplemental observers for the OAS observation of the June parliamentary and local elections and for the complementary elections held in August. This division of labour was economical and practical in allowing each organization to focus on planning and implementing one specific area of mission responsibility. More detailed information on the mission is provided in the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) (S/1995/305).

11. The recent elections in Armenia provided an opportunity for the United Nations and OSCE to share, for the first time, in establishing a joint secretariat to provide coordination and support for international observers. The secretariat was established early in May; the first observers arrived in June. Representatives of the two organizations cooperated on all aspects of the mission, including the deployment of observers and the coordination of technical assistance for the electoral commission. Interim and final statements on the electoral process were also prepared jointly.

12. Based on the success of the United Nations/OSCE mission in Armenia, a similar mission is now being organized at the request of the Government of Azerbaijan in order to provide coordination and support for international observers arriving for the national elections in November. This form of United Nations electoral assistance, first utilized in Ethiopia in 1992, has proved highly effective and economical. Since 1992, it has been used with good results for elections in such countries as Lesotho, Malawi, Niger and, currently, the United Republic of Tanzania. This approach to electoral assistance is clearly becoming the method of choice.

13. From 28 to 30 April 1995, a charter-drafting committee meeting was held in Capetown, South Africa, in order to prepare for the inauguration of the African Association of Election Administrators. The founding of this Association was one of the results of the November 1994 Colloquium on African Election Administration (A/49/675, annex II). The Capetown meeting provided an opportunity for participants to review and adopt a charter for the Association and to develop a plan and programme of action to advance the democratization process in Africa.

14. The Secretary-General welcomed the founding, in February 1995, of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), an intergovernmental organization based in Stockholm. The four basic fields of the Institute are: (a) the creation of a databank and provision of information services; (b) research; (c) the establishment and promotion of guidelines; and (d) the provision of capacity-building and advisory services. IDEA promises to be a valuable new international partner in the study and provision of electoral assistance and democratization.

15. The Electoral Assistance Division, together with IDEA, sponsored a round table on international observation of elections in Stockholm from 10 to 12 October 1995. The round table provided an opportunity for a small group of senior election experts: (a) to examine recent electoral observation experiences and assess the actual value of an international observer presence for elections; (b) to encourage discussion of critical issues and promote discussion of possible standards and guidelines for election observation; and (c) to explore the possibilities for greater coordination among observer delegations and sponsoring organizations. A report on the proceedings of the round table is currently in preparation.

C. Ongoing activities

16. In accordance with resolution 46/137 of 17 December 1991, the Electoral Assistance Division continues to maintain and expand its roster of electoral experts. Approximately 250 curricula vitae are received each year for possible addition to the roster. The roster now includes experts from a wide variety of electoral fields, as indicated in last year's report (A/49/675, annex II). Efforts are currently under way to computerize the roster for more efficient maintenance and retrieval of names.

17. As of 23 October 1995, the United Nations Trust Fund for Electoral Observation held a total balance of US\$ 1,479,509. This balance reflects contributions from such countries as Austria, Canada, Denmark, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, since the creation of the Fund in 1992.

18. The Electoral Assistance Division is currently planning the preparation of a series of technical papers on specific issues such as election budget preparation, alternative electoral systems, voter identification card development, ballot-counting procedures and delimitation of constituency and polling district boundaries. Each paper will be reviewed by two or three

experts in the field concerned. The purpose of the papers is to provide authoritative information and easy reference for national election officials, thereby assisting them in the conduct of their work and decreasing the need for external consultancies.

19. The Electoral Assistance Division is also initiating the preparation of a series of manuals on the planning and implementation of particular types of electoral assistance. The first manual to be produced will relate to the provision of coordination and support for international observers. Standardized checklists and other observation materials will also be prepared on the basis of similar materials used in past missions.

20. In addition to these technical publications, the Electoral Assistance Division, together with the Department of Public Information, is currently preparing a volume in the Blue Books Series on United Nations electoral assistance, which will be published early in 1996. The Division continues to publish, on a regular basis, a monthly bulletin entitled Electoral Assistance Activities of the United Nations System. The bulletin provides the basis for a six-month report and the more comprehensive annual report on the electoral assistance activities of the United Nations system.

III. UNITED NATIONS EXPERIENCE

A. Major United Nations missions

21. The only major electoral mission of the past year was undertaken in Haiti as part of the larger United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH). As reported earlier, based on an agreement between the United Nations and OAS, the United Nations was responsible for the provision of technical and advisory services to the Provisional Electoral Council. OAS took responsibility for organizing the international observation of elections. In fulfilling its mandate, the United Nations established a 17-person electoral assistance team within the UNMIH framework in order to assist the Commission in preparing and conducting the parliamentary and local government elections held on 25 June 1995 and the complementary elections held on 13 August 1995. Additional rounds of elections took place on 17 September and 8 October 1995. The team assisted with such activities as voter registration, the resolution of technical issues, for example balloting procedure and procurement, and election material logistics. It also contributed significantly to the coordination of financial and logistical arrangements related to elections, as well as of the support provided by the military and police components, which was essential for the successful conduct of the mission.

22. It is anticipated that the team will remain in Haiti in order to assist with the presidential elections scheduled for 17 December 1995 and a possible second round early in 1996. Additional details regarding the mission are contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Haiti (S/1995/305).

B. Support for international observers

23. Between 16 October 1994 and 17 October 1995, the Electoral Assistance Division organized an international observation mission, with OSCE, for the elections held in Armenia on 5 and 19 July 1995. This mission is described in paragraph 11 above. Some 90 observers were provided by 18 Governments, and by intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and deployed throughout the country. Following a common debriefing session, the observers issued a statement on the campaign, the conduct of the elections and the vote count.

C. Technical assistance and advisory services

24. In the year since 17 October 1994, the United Nations system has provided technical assistance or advisory services to 19 Member States. In some cases, several types of assistance were provided; in other cases, assistance was provided as a single discrete project. Such assistance continues to be that most frequently requested and is often combined with other forms of assistance, such as the coordination of international observers. Technical assistance is generally highly cost-effective and oriented towards increasing national capacity in the particular field.

25. Among the types of technical assistance and advisory services provided over the past year were advice on electoral systems and methods of power-sharing, assistance with computerization, election logistics and procurement, preparation of a census and identity cards, review and amendment of electoral laws and training of electoral officials and national observers. Technical and advisory services are provided by the Electoral Assistance Division, the Department for Development Support and Management Services, UNDP and the Centre for Human Rights, depending on the expertise required. UNDP has also been particularly instrumental in facilitating funding for such projects.

IV. REFLECTIONS FOR FUTURE ACTIVITY

26. As noted in the introduction to the present report, recent experience has indicated that the need for large-scale electoral assistance missions is declining. This change may reflect a more general evolution of the context in which electoral assistance is provided. The report entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies" (A/50/332) reflects more generally on this issue. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, many Governments faced the conduct of multi-party elections for the first time. Such elections often led to major changes in political processes, structures and participants. As of 1995, however, many Governments have had at least one experience of conducting such elections. Their assistance needs, if any, are now more limited and more readily defined than in the past. The result is a growing need for specific types of expert assistance, aimed at supporting and strengthening the existing capability of a requesting Government. A proliferation of requests for this type of assistance signals the beginning of a new, "second-generation" phase in the provision of electoral assistance.

27. As the demand for electoral assistance shifts away from large-scale verification missions to smaller and more economical assistance projects, the emphasis on capacity-building has become more pronounced. In this context, consideration is being given to the provision of more "client-oriented" forms of assistance. One such form of assistance would be the use of teams of highly qualified and well-known experts in order to review and provide an objective assessment of existing electoral systems and procedures. The assessment could be provided at early stages in the process and focus on the electoral law and registration procedures. A second option would be to send a small group of senior experts during the last phase of an electoral process in order to review, observe and assess the logistic arrangements and procedures for polling and counting. Although the experts might help to build confidence in the electoral systems, the main focus of such assessments would be to provide Governments and electoral commissions with advice on the streamlining, improvement and strengthening of their existing electoral institutions and procedures. I believe this approach would be especially useful for the forthcoming "second generation" of pluralistic elections.

28. As mentioned in last year's report (A/49/675 and Corr.1), the Electoral Assistance Division is an important source of information regarding past mission experience, current practice and technical advice. In order to provide ready reference for those engaged in planning an election or organizing future electoral assistance missions, the preparation of a variety of technical papers and manuals has been planned. However, such publications are necessarily of secondary importance if government requests for assistance are received or if a large-scale mission must be organized. For the present, no new major missions have been mandated for the next year; this hiatus may afford the opportunity to make significant progress in preparing the planned documents.

29. The United Nations will continue to make every effort to provide the electoral assistance that is most appropriate to the needs expressed by Member States. Although there are now several useful approaches that can be combined and adapted to suit particular needs, it is hoped that electoral assistance will shift increasingly to smaller, more supportive and capacity-building projects. The Secretary-General is also committed to enhancing cooperation with other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations active in this field. By maintaining flexibility with regard to approach and by coordinating with other organizations, it will be possible to respond effectively and efficiently to the new demands anticipated for the future.

ANNEX

Status of Member States' requests as of 17 October 1995

Based on information received as of 23 October 1995, the electoral assistance activities of the United Nations between 18 October 1994 and 17 October 1995 are provided below according to country.

ALGERIA

Request: On 6 August 1995, the Government of Algeria requested the Secretary-General to send United Nations observers to follow the presidential elections scheduled for November 1995.

Action taken: In September 1995, the Director of the Electoral Assistance Division and an officer from the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator conducted a needs assessment mission. The members of the team subsequently submitted their reports. The United Nations plans to send six observers in November 1995 to follow the final stage of the electoral process and to report to the United Nations on its conduct and outcome.

ARMENIA

Request: On 13 January 1995, the Secretary-General received a letter from the Government of Armenia requesting United Nations assistance in coordinating international observers and supporting national observers for the upcoming elections.

Action taken: In late February 1995, an officer from the Electoral Assistance Division was sent to the country to assess the overall political situation and the possibilities for United Nations support. The officer returned in April 1995 to establish a Joint Operation Unit with a representative of OSCE. The purpose of the joint operation was to coordinate and support activities of the international observers. On election day, 5 July 1995, the joint operation deployed over 90 observers throughout the country to observe the conduct of the elections, and the United Nations and OSCE subsequently presented a joint report. The second round of elections took place on 19 July 1995, and on 2 August the OSCE/United Nations Joint Operation for the Election Monitoring in Armenia issued a final press release. A comprehensive report was prepared thereafter.

AZERBAIJAN

Request: In June 1995, the Government requested the United Nations to send a needs assessment mission in connection with the election scheduled for 12 November 1995.

Action taken: In mid-June 1995, an officer from the Electoral Assistance Division and a representative of OSCE visited the country to conduct a needs assessment mission. In late September 1995, a United Nations consultant was sent to establish an OSCE/United Nations Joint Observer Mission, and a second consultant joined the team in October 1995.

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BANGLADESH

Request: In February 1995, the Resident Representative of UNDP in Bangladesh informed the focal point for electoral assistance that the Government had requested the fielding of a needs assessment mission on electoral assistance for the next general elections.

Action taken: In March 1995, the Director of the Electoral Assistance Division visited the country and prepared a report with recommendations on future assistance.

BENIN

Request: On 6 March 1995, the Government of Benin, through UNDP, sent a request for United Nations assistance to coordinate the international observers invited for the legislative elections scheduled for 28 March 1995.

Action taken: Owing to the lack of lead time, the United Nations Secretariat could not provide assistance. However, a coordination committee composed of the UNDP office in Benin, the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation (ACCT), the Study and Research Group on Democracy, Economic and Social Development in Africa (GERDDES-Africa), and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), was established to coordinate the activities of international observers monitoring the elections.

BRAZIL

Request: In November 1993, the Supreme Electoral Court requested technical assistance for the computerization of the electoral system in Brazil (see A/49/675, annex I).

Action taken: A UNDP technical assistance project (BRA/93/035) was established. Under the provisions of that project, in September 1995 the Resident Representative in the country requested a mission composed of two to four experts to travel to Brazil for one to two weeks in order to advise the electoral authorities on the purchase of an electronic voting system.

CHAD

Request: On 3 January 1995, the Government sent a request to the Secretary-General for assistance in the electoral process taking place in Chad.

Action taken: Under the provisions of an existing UNDP project (CHD/94/501), a consultant conducted a needs assessment mission in March 1995 and prepared a report. A separate UNDP technical assistance project (CHD/95/004), to be implemented by the United Nations Office for Project Services, was signed in September 1995. Through the project, the United Nations will provide technical, material and financial assistance to the electoral process in Chad.

CONGO

Request: In March 1995, UNDP informed the Electoral Assistance Division that the Government of Congo had requested the

participation of international observers for the last phase of the legislative elections scheduled for 9 April 1995.

Action taken: The United Nations informed the Government that, owing to the lack of lead time, it would not be possible to organize an effective observation mission.

COTE D'IVOIRE Request: In April 1995, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire requested the Secretary-General to provide observers for the elections scheduled for the last quarter of 1995.

Action taken: In June 1995, an officer from the Department for Development Support and Management Services and a consultant conducted a needs assessment mission to evaluate the situation in the country and the possibilities for United Nations involvement. Subsequently, under the provisions of a UNDP project (IVC/95/001), implemented by the Department, an electoral consultant travelled to the country early in September to meet with the donor community. The consultant returned to the country at the end of September to coordinate the international observers for the presidential elections to be held on 22 October 1995. However, owing to the opposition parties' withdrawal from the electoral process, many countries decided not to send observers. The United Nations consultant will remain in the country throughout the process, in order to submit a report to the United Nations on the conduct and outcome of the elections.

EL SALVADOR Request: Early in 1995, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal requested United Nations involvement in the discussion of reforms to the electoral system and the introduction of a national identification document.

Action taken: In February 1995, under the provisions of a UNDP project (ELS/93/L04), a mission led by the Director of the Electoral Assistance Division and composed of an officer from the Department of Peace-keeping Operations and three international experts visited the country. A two-day forum on the implementation of the recommended reforms immediately followed the mission. An electoral expert from Nicaragua and three specialists from Mexico joined the forum to share their experiences with electoral reform.

EQUATORIAL
GUINEA Request: In connection with an existing UNDP technical assistance project (EQG/93/002) implemented by the Department for Development Support and Management Services, the Government requested assistance in connection with the census exercise taking place in the country. In August 1995, the Government further requested the United Nations to send two observers for the municipal elections scheduled for 17 September 1995.

Action taken: In February 1995, a census expert was sent to the country. Other assistance included financial support for the

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recruitment, training and transport of census agents, as well as for the printing of identity cards. Regarding the request for United Nations observers, an electoral expert joined the census expert, who, together with other international observers, monitored the polling exercise. A report has been submitted.

ETHIOPIA

Request: With the Government's agreement, the Donor Election Unit, which had been established in February 1995 by the international donor community to monitor the electoral process leading up to the national and regional elections held on 7 May 1995, requested UNDP to provide management and logistical support to the Unit.

Action taken: UNDP provided support to the Unit in monitoring the electoral process.

FIJI

Request: In July 1995, the United Nations received a request from the Chairman of the Fiji Constitution Review Commission for assistance in identifying experts on electoral systems and methods of "power-sharing" in multi-ethnic societies, and for possible financial support.

Action taken: The Electoral Assistance Division recommended several experts to the Commission, which subsequently selected five experts, to be funded by the United Nations, to prepare the papers. The papers are to be submitted to the Commission by December 1995.

GABON

Request: In May 1995, the Resident Representative of UNDP in the country notified the Electoral Assistance Division that the Government had requested a needs assessment mission.

Action taken: In July 1995, an officer of the Department for Development Support and Management Services and an electoral expert conducted a mission, and a report was subsequently presented. Alternative options for further involvement are under consideration.

GAMBIA

Request: In April 1995, the Government of the Gambia sent a request to the Secretary-General for United Nations assistance with the 1996 elections.

Action taken: In May 1995, an officer from the Department for Development Support and Management Services and an electoral expert conducted a needs assessment mission and prepared a project document. In August 1995, under the provisions of a UNDP project (GAM/95/005), to be implemented by the Department, the United Nations sent a consultant to assist the electoral authorities in reviewing the existing electoral law. The United Nations also plans to send two consultants in October 1995 to provide technical assistance to the electoral authorities. In

addition, three United Nations Volunteers will be recruited to assist in training, logistics and computerization.

GUINEA

Request: In April 1995, the Government of Guinea sent a request to the Secretary-General for observers to the legislative elections scheduled for 11 June 1995.

Action taken: In June 1995, the United Nations sent an officer from the Department of Political Affairs to follow the conclusion of the electoral process and to prepare an internal report.

HAITI

Request: On 30 September 1994, the Permanent Representative of Haiti to the United Nations sent a letter to the Secretary-General requesting technical and operational assistance during the forthcoming electoral process (see A/49/675, annex I).

Action taken: In November 1994, a technical assistance team, headed by a staff member of the Electoral Assistance Division, was sent to Haiti to assist the electoral authorities in organizing the electoral process. UNMIH also staffed a small electoral component. In February 1995, a United Nations Trust Fund for Electoral Assistance to Haiti was established to provide financial assistance to the electoral process. The first round of the legislative elections was held on 25 June 1995, but owing to numerous problems, it had to be repeated in some constituencies. In August 1995, a team composed of the Director of the Electoral Assistance Division and a senior policy adviser from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) visited Haiti to review the ongoing technical assistance being provided to the electoral authorities. The partial legislative elections took place on 13 August 1995, and the second round on 17 September 1995. Further partial elections took place on 8 October 1995.

HONDURAS

Request: In March 1994, the Government requested assistance in reforming the electoral system in order to create greater operational transparency (see A/49/675, annex I).

Action taken: In March 1995, the Electoral Assistance Division, in cooperation with UNDP, organized a forum on updating the civilian and electoral registers in Honduras. Three electoral consultants from Latin America were invited to share their countries' respective experiences and to conduct comparative studies. A staff member from the Department of Peace-keeping Operations represented the Division at the forum.

KYRGYZSTAN

Request: In December 1994, the Government sent a request for United Nations assistance in connection with the elections scheduled for February 1995. In October 1995, the Government requested United Nations support to the Election Commission in connection with the presidential elections to be held on 24 December 1995.

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Action taken: The United Nations assisted with the organization of regional seminars designed to train some 6,000 electoral officials, candidates and members of the local community. In addition, an officer from the Electoral Assistance Division travelled to the country to observe the parliamentary elections held on 5 February 1995 (first round) and 19 February 1995 (second round), and to assess the need for post-election assistance. Subsequently, the officer presented a report on the conduct and outcome of the electoral process.

LIBERIA

Request: On 11 February 1992, the Government requested technical and financial assistance for the electoral process (see A/48/590, annex, and A/49/675, annex I).

Action taken: In March 1995, an officer from the Department for Development Support and Management Services, the implementing agency for a UNDP project (LIR/92/001), travelled to the country to assess the status of the existing technical assistance project. In the light of the political instability in the country at that time, the project was held in abeyance. On 19 August 1995, the Liberian parties signed a peace agreement in Abuja. In accordance with the agreement, elections are scheduled to take place on 20 August 1996. A United Nations technical team, currently in the country to review the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), will prepare recommendations based on the present situation. The electoral technical assistance project will also be reviewed.

MEXICO

Request: Late in May 1994, the Government requested technical and financial assistance to national observers for the elections scheduled for 21 August 1994 (see A/49/675, annex I). In addition, in September 1995, the electoral authorities requested the Electoral Assistance Division to assist them in organizing a seminar on "Conditions for fair electoral competition: access to mass media and campaign financing".

Action taken: Through a project implemented by UNDP/Office for Project Services, the Electoral Assistance Division assisted the electoral authorities in Mexico by providing support to local non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Further support was requested in connection with elections at the state level. A mission travelled to the country in May 1995 in order to finalize the previous project and to meet with the electoral authorities regarding future activities. The seminar, which was previously scheduled to take place in Mexico City in November 1995, has been postponed to 1996. The Division is assisting the Mexican electoral authorities in identifying participants for the seminar.

MOZAMBIQUE

Request: Under the terms of the General Peace Agreement for Mozambique of 4 October 1992, the United Nations was invited to

observe the elections scheduled to take place within a year of its signing (see A/48/590, annex, and A/49/675, annex I).

Action taken: The presidential and parliamentary elections were held from 27 to 29 October 1994. Over 2,300 international electoral observers were deployed throughout the country to observe the polling. Although the counting process took longer than initially foreseen, the elections were declared free and fair by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. The electoral activities of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) have been described in detail in the following reports to the Security Council: S/1994/89 and Add.1 and 2, S/1994/511, S/1994/803, S/1994/1002, S/1994/1009, S/1994/1196 and S/1994/1449. In addition, in March 1995, an officer from the Department for Development Support and Management Services travelled to the country in order to close the UNDP technical assistance project for support to the electoral authorities. In addition, a team led by the same officer, and composed of three other electoral experts, was created to provide assistance to the government programme for democracy building. The mission's purpose was to identify the priority needs and types of assistance most likely to contribute to the building of democratic institutions and processes during the early post-electoral period in Mozambique, and to establish the framework for the formulation of a post-election assistance programme. The mission presented its report to UNDP and donor representatives in Maputo.

NAMIBIA

Request: In July 1994, the Government requested assistance in the coordination of international and national observers for the general elections scheduled for December 1994 (see A/49/675, annex I).

Action taken: In November 1994 the United Nations provided a short-term consultant to assist the Director of Elections' with arrangements for international observers, who were provided mainly by diplomatic missions and international organizations accredited to Namibia. The first post-independence general elections were held on 7 and 8 December 1994 and were observed by over 150 international and national observers. The consultant has submitted a general report on the observation.

NICARAGUA

Request: On 27 September 1995, the Government of Nicaragua addressed a request to the Secretary-General for United Nations observers for the electoral process culminating with the general elections scheduled for November 1996.

Action taken: The request is currently under consideration.

NIGER

Request: In December 1994, the Foreign Minister of Niger invited the United Nations to send observers to the parliamentary elections scheduled for January 1995.

Action taken: In late December 1994, the United Nations sent a consultant to the country to advise the electoral authorities and the donor community on the electoral process.

PANAMA

Request: In November 1993, the Government requested UNDP to provide technical assistance to the Electoral Tribunal (A/49/675, annex I).

Action taken: The United Nations continues to provide technical assistance, under the provisions of a UNDP project (PAN/93/006). It is planned that in November 1995 an informatics expert will be sent to the country to provide further assistance.

REPUBLIC OF
MOLDOVA

Request: In February 1995, the Government of the Republic of Moldova sent a letter, through the United Nations Centre for Human Rights, requesting observers for the referendum scheduled for 5 March 1995.

Action taken: The United Nations Secretariat could not provide assistance owing to insufficient lead time.

SIERRA LEONE

Request: In March 1994, the Government requested technical assistance in the planning and organization of the forthcoming elections (see A/49/675, annex I).

Action taken: In November 1994, a needs assessment mission comprising an officer from the Electoral Assistance Division and a consultant travelled to the country to consult with the authorities and identify priority electoral assistance needs. A mission report was prepared, including a budget proposal for assistance to the electoral process. In February 1995, under the provisions of a UNDP project (SIL/93/011) being implemented by the Department for Development Support and Management Services, a United Nations officer travelled to the country to discuss the mechanisms for electoral assistance and to meet with the donor community. In June 1995, under the same project, an electoral expert was sent to assist the Electoral Commission. A National Consultative Conference on the Electoral Process was held in Freetown from 15 to 17 August 1995. The Conference decided that the presidential and parliamentary elections should be held simultaneously in February 1996, and that international observers should be invited to monitor the entire electoral process. The Conference also decided that the elections be based on a proportional representation system. Accordingly, the Chairman of the Interim National Electoral Commission requested the United Nations to advise the Commission on the system. The Electoral Assistance Division identified an expert, who travelled to Sierra Leone at the end of September for a period of two weeks. In addition, a chief technical adviser to the UNDP project will be sent shortly to assist the electoral authorities in organizing the entire electoral process.

THE FORMER
YUGOSLAV
REPUBLIC OF
MACEDONIA

Request: Within the good offices function of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the former Yugoslavia provided for in paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 908 (1994) of 31 March 1994, the President of Parliament invited the Special Representative to observe the presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for October 1994.

Action taken: An officer from the Special Representative's Office joined the then Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) (subsequently renamed the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)), the Council of Europe and other international organizations in monitoring the elections.

UGANDA

Request: In June 1995, in connection with the presidential and parliamentary elections to be scheduled, the Government requested further United Nations technical assistance to be provided to the Electoral Commission.

Action taken: A new UNDP project document is currently being reviewed. The Electoral Assistance Division is identifying a chief technical adviser and a consultant on civic education to assist the Electoral Commission under the provisions of the project.

UNITED
REPUBLIC OF
TANZANIA

Request: In March 1995, UNDP informed the Electoral Assistance Division that the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania intended to request the participation of international observers in the elections scheduled for October 1995, and requested assistance in the planning of United Nations involvement. In June 1995, the Government sent a request to the United Nations to send observers and to coordinate the activities of the international observers.

Action taken: In May 1995, an officer from the Electoral Assistance Division and a consultant conducted a needs assessment mission. In August 1995, under the provisions of a UNDP project (URT/95/006), implemented by the Department for Development Support and Management Services, the United Nations sent one electoral expert to work in close coordination with the Chairman of the National Elections Commission and another consultant to assist in the coordination of the international observers present during the ongoing electoral process. In addition, the Government of Canada provided a consultant to assist the Zanzibar Elections Commission. Elections are scheduled for 22 October 1995 in Zanzibar and 29 October 1995 in the entire country.

UZBEKISTAN

Request: On 24 October 1994, the Government invited a group of United Nations observers to monitor the parliamentary elections scheduled for 25 December 1994.

Action taken: Owing to the short lead time, the Resident Coordinator in the country was requested to follow the electoral process closely and report to the Secretary-General on its conduct and outcome.

ZIMBABWE

Request: In May 1995, the Resident Representative of UNDP, at the request of the Zimbabwe Electoral Supervisory Commission, sought background information on setting up provincial offices to facilitate the supervision of the electoral process with the support of the NGO community.

Action taken: The Electoral Assistance Division provided a short note on the issue.



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STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER
RELIEF ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, INCLUDING SPECIAL
ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE: EMERGENCY INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR
PEACE, NORMALCY AND RECONSTRUCTION OF WAR-STRICKEN AFGHANISTAN

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 49/140, which was adopted without a vote on 20 December 1994. In that resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to authorize the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan, established under resolution 48/208, to continue its efforts to facilitate national rapprochement and reconstruction in Afghanistan, in particular by promoting the earliest possible establishment of a fully representative and broad-based authoritative council with authority:

- (a) To negotiate and oversee an immediate and durable cease-fire;
- (b) To create and control a national security force to provide for security throughout the country and oversee the collection and safeguarding of all heavy weapons in the country;
- (c) To form an acceptable transitional Government, which could, inter alia, control the national security force, until conditions for free and fair elections were established throughout the country, possibly utilizing traditional decision-making structures, such as a grand assembly, to help to establish those conditions.

2. The Assembly also called upon all Afghans, especially the leaders of the warring parties, to agree on an immediate cease-fire and a speedy transfer of power and to support the Special Mission's efforts to facilitate national reconstruction, expedite the process leading to the speedy establishment of an acceptable transitional Government and restore a fully representative and broad-based Government for Afghanistan.



3. The Assembly further requested me to continue efforts to develop plans for national reconstruction and rehabilitation, beginning in areas of peace and security, on the basis of the recommendations contained in my previous report (A/49/688).

4. The Assembly also requested me to report to it at its fiftieth session on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution. The present report covers the period from the adoption of resolution 49/140 to mid-September 1995.

II. THE SPECIAL MISSION AND THE POLITICAL SITUATION

5. During the reporting period, Ambassador Mahmoud Mestiri continued to serve as Head of the Special Mission and, in that capacity, undertook two rounds of consultations in the region. In these efforts, he received the assistance of the Office of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan, which I established in January 1995 following the discontinuation of the function of the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Pakistan in December 1994. I further decided that, from the beginning of 1995 and until conditions permitted its return to Kabul, the Office of the Secretary-General would be located in Jalalabad.

A. Developments during the period from December 1994 to April 1995

6. On 26 December 1994, the Head of the Special Mission began another round of the mediation efforts in Afghanistan, in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 49/140. The purpose of this phase was to seek the transfer of power from President Burhanuddin Rabbani, whose term of office was expiring on 28 December 1994, to an acceptable and broadly representative "mechanism". Mr. Rabbani often reiterated to the Head of the Special Mission his willingness to transfer power if the United Nations established an appropriate mechanism for the purpose. That mechanism would serve as the first step towards initiating a broad-based political dialogue that would include not only the warring parties but also the neutral parties and independent Afghan personalities.

7. The Head of the Special Mission met several times with President Rabbani in Kabul, with the head of the National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan (NIMA), General Rashid Dostum, and with the members of the Supreme Coordination Council, which included the leader of the Hezb-e-Islami, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. He also met with the Governor Hajji Abdul Qadir of Nangarhar province, with Governor Ismael Khan of Herat province, and with the leaders of the Taliban, an emerging military faction, which by then was in effective control of several provinces. After many difficult discussions and negotiations, an agreement was reached on the composition of an interim mechanism, and Mr. Rabbani agreed to transfer power on 20 February 1995. However, the rapid advance of the Taliban forces towards Kabul and their arrival at the outskirts of the city on 11 February created confusion and disarray among the traditional parties and disrupted the plan for the transfer of power.

8. In these circumstances, Mr. Rabbani insisted that the Taliban should be included in the mechanism. The Taliban, on the other hand, while expressing support for the United Nations peace efforts and agreeing to negotiate with the mechanism, refused to participate in it with political parties that they held responsible for the destruction of the country. The Special Mission, with the assistance of a group of four prominent Afghans, 1/ tried to persuade the Taliban to join the mechanism and thus break the deadlock, but to no avail. The transfer of power did not, therefore, take place as planned, and Mr. Rabbani remained in power in Kabul.

9. On 22 February, a working group comprising the aforementioned four independent Afghans was established to negotiate with Mr. Rabbani and the Taliban an acceptable modality for the latter's participation in the transfer-of-power mechanism. Mr. Rabbani, in the meantime, agreed to a formula by which the mechanism would comprise two representatives from each of the provinces in Afghanistan and between 10 and 20 independent Afghan personalities. The idea of provincial representation in the mechanism was also acceptable to the Taliban. On this basis, it was agreed that power would be transferred on 21 March 1995, the first day of the Afghan New Year.

10. While these discussions were going on, preparations were being made for a military confrontation in Kabul. On 6 March, heavy fighting broke out in the south-western part of the city, initially between the government forces and those of the Hezb-e-Wahdat, led by Abdul Mazari. The Taliban then joined in on the side of the Hezb-e-Wahdat. The fighting was unusually fierce and exacted heavy casualties, especially among the civilian population. At the end, the government forces gained control of the whole of Kabul.

11. Despite these hostilities, the Special Mission continued negotiations on the mechanism. However, new conditions were demanded and this blocked agreement. With the renewed fighting and in the absence of any immediate prospects for progress on the political front, I requested the Head of the Special Mission to leave Afghanistan for a short time in order to reassess the direction and modalities of the United Nations effort. He left the region on 13 April 1995.

B. Developments from mid-April to mid-September 1995

12. During the period from mid-April to the end of August 1995, a relative calm prevailed in Kabul and in most parts of Afghanistan. The country was effectively controlled by three major military powers: Mr. Rabbani and his Commander, Ahmad Shah Massoud, together with their ally, Governor Ismael Khan; General Dostum, mainly in the northern part of the country; and the Taliban in the south and south-eastern provinces. Meanwhile, a series of intra-Afghan negotiations took place among the leaders of these groups, at times with the involvement of outside countries. But no significant results emerged from these talks.

13. In the weeks following the Special Mission's departure from Afghanistan, I received numerous requests from Afghans and others that it should resume its peacemaking efforts as soon as possible. In June, the Head of the Special

Mission came to New York for consultations on his possible return to the region. I reviewed with him the various modalities of further peace efforts, such as the need to bring in all Afghan factions; the need to work with the various outside parties, possibly including, at the appropriate stage, the convening of an international conference; and the desirability of having the Head of the Special Mission remain for a prolonged period inside Afghanistan, combined with a strengthening of the political staff of the Office of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan in order to ensure an effective presence in different parts of the country. On 20 June, the Head of the Special Mission briefed the Security Council on the situation in Afghanistan and the prospects for peace. He received the support and encouragement of the Council to press on with his efforts.

14. I accordingly requested the Head of the Special Mission to return to Afghanistan in July to undertake an updated assessment of the situation there with a view to developing options for a resumed peace process.

15. In the initial stage of his consultations in the region, the Head of the Special Mission met with senior officials of the Government of Saudi Arabia in Jeddah. He also met with the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Mr. Hamid Al-Gabid, and exchanged views on possibilities for enhanced coordination between the United Nations and OIC missions in the future.

16. On 19 July, the Head of the Special Mission arrived in Afghanistan and started a round of meetings with Governor Hajji Abdul Qadir and the members of the Supreme Coordination Council in Jalalabad; with President Rabbani in Kabul; with the Taliban Shura in Kandahar; with Governor Ismael Khan in Herat; and with General Dostum in Mazar-i-Sharif. In Pakistan, the Head of the Special Mission met Mr. Hekmatyar at Parachinar; the leader of the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan (NIFA), Pir Sayed Ahmed Gailani; and Sardar Abdul Wali, the envoy of former King Zahir Shah. He also met the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Aseff Ahmad Ali, and was received by the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. While in Islamabad, he held several further discussions with senior officials of OIC, including its Secretary-General.

17. The Head of the Special Mission concluded his assessment mission on 1 August and reported to me. He was encouraged by the results of the positive and useful discussions he had had with various Afghan leaders and by the persistent and overwhelming desire among the Afghan people for a United Nations-mediated peace in their country. I endorsed his main conclusion, which was to press ahead with the efforts of the Special Mission regarding the transfer-of-power mechanism and to seek a negotiated agreement on its establishment, in accordance with the General Assembly mandate. The Head of the Special Mission was accordingly requested to resume his mission as soon as possible.

18. Meanwhile, on 23 August, heavy fighting commenced in western Afghanistan between the Government-backed forces of Ismael Khan and the Taliban. This led to the takeover of the important province of Herat by the Taliban on 5 September. Skirmishes at varying levels of intensity have since continued in

parts of Afghanistan and there has been evidence of preparations for a major assault on Kabul by the forces opposed to Mr. Rabbani.

19. The Head of the Special Mission returned to the region on 16 September to begin the current phase of the Special Mission's work. A report on this phase will be issued as an addendum to the present report.

III. REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

A. United Nations system rehabilitation activities

20. During the past year, the United Nations development system continued to assist in rehabilitation and reconstruction activities in the majority of Afghanistan that is peaceful. The United Nations system has an operational presence in the capital and each of the four major regions and has been able to undertake rehabilitation activities in 80 per cent of the country's 329 districts.

21. Even before the conflict started, Afghanistan was among the poorest of the least developed countries, and the conflict has resulted in a further deterioration in the quality of life for most Afghan people. The incidence of disease and malnutrition in some of the more remote areas of the country is reaching alarming proportions. The need to address these poverty-related issues simultaneously with the rehabilitation of war-affected areas has generated a flexible response from the United Nations system in providing a range of assistance programmes tailored to the needs of the beneficiary communities. It has also strengthened the close linkages and coordination between the United Nations system's activities for humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation in Afghanistan.

22. In carrying out its rehabilitation programmes, the United Nations system depends greatly on the local knowledge and experience of Afghan and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as implementing partners as well as on functioning government departments in the regions as well as in the capital. Where possible, cost recovery is employed in order to enhance the sustainability of rehabilitation efforts. The United Nations system also relies to an increasing extent on the participation of local communities in identifying and monitoring rehabilitation activities to be carried out, as well as in implementation. Its experience in Afghanistan shows that community participation, besides being sound development administration practice, reinforces the local communities' stake in peace and stability and thus contributes to the national peace process.

23. The United Nations system's operational activities for rehabilitation during the past year have focused on assisting local communities in rural infrastructure, food production, health improvement, animal health services, rehabilitation of disabled people and human settlements. The main underlying purpose of these activities is poverty alleviation and human development. While most of them are located in rural areas, particularly areas with the greatest potential to stimulate the return of refugees, substantial assistance is also

being directed to rehabilitation in urban areas. The main activities of the United Nations system, and the results achieved, are described below.

1. Rural economic production

24. The main United Nations system organizations involved in implementing projects for the rehabilitation of rural economic production are the United Nations Office for Project Services, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The activities of the United Nations Office for Project Services and FAO are carried out in the framework of three projects financed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) approved in mid-1994. UNDP's strategy is to deliver a substantial programme focused on restoring key components of the food production base and fostering community participation, drawing on the inherent strengths and resilience of the Afghan people.

25. UNDP's programme strategy uses district rehabilitation shuras, local representative bodies functioning within traditional administrative boundaries, as the means for local communities to determine their own priorities for rehabilitation. Other agencies base their assistance on other forms of community organization, including those identified according to a functional definition. Common to all United Nations system programmes is the aim of promoting local self-sufficiency and sustainability, including through the participation of the private sector. The United Nations system concentrates on rehabilitating key items of infrastructure that are beyond the independent capacity of the communities, such as irrigation systems and secondary feeder roads, being rebuilt with WFP assistance to link production areas to markets. These activities also seek to address several other key aims of the United Nations system, such as the integration of returnees into their communities through support from UNHCR and the eventual elimination of illicit crop production, which is a priority of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP).

26. Some of the results achieved by the United Nations system in the field of rural economic production are:

(a) FAO, in collaboration with other United Nations agencies, rehabilitated traditional village irrigation systems, provided technical backstopping and supervision to agricultural programmes and conducted emergency training to re-establish the technical know-how needed to support the rehabilitation strategy;

(b) By the end of 1994, 48 per cent of farmers nationally were planting improved varieties of staple crops, mainly wheat. The figures rose to 100 per cent, 92 per cent and 88 per cent in Paktika, Kandahar and Paktia provinces respectively, where FAO's programme was focused. Over 60 per cent of all farmers received their improved wheat seed from NGOs;

(c) During 1994 and the first half of 1995, Afghans who received WFP food for work built 17 kilometres of retaining walls for flood protection, repaired

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nearly 1,300 kilometres of roads, including small bridges and culverts, planted over 8,000 hectares of orchards and supported communities to repair over 3,000 kilometres of irrigation canals, involving, inter alia, the construction of water reservoirs with a capacity of 2,854,000 litres, providing drinking water and irrigation water for over 500,000 hectares of agricultural land in the country. These activities benefited over 3 million people;

(d) The United Nations Office for Project Services, funded by UNDP, has in recent years rehabilitated over 2,600 kilometres of irrigation systems, restoring water to 470,000 hectares and increasing wheat production by 376,000 tons, sufficient to feed over 1.4 million people for a year. FAO has similarly repaired 280 kilometres of canals, restoring water to 24,000 hectares and increasing wheat production by 18,500 tons;

(e) The United Nations Office for Project Services, with UNDP funding, has also improved and repaired over 275 water supply systems in rural villages, bringing safer water to 210,000 local residents;

(f) In the last half of 1994, veterinarians and basic veterinary workers, trained by the United Nations Office for Project Services and FAO with UNDP funding, vaccinated and treated 12 million animals in 26 provinces.

27. Since mid-1990, UNHCR has assisted 2.25 million Afghan refugees to return to their villages. This direct assistance consists of cash grants to cover transport costs, wheat and plastic sheeting. In addition, UNHCR has been implementing quick impact projects in order to revive the communities affected by high rates of return. These projects cover most of the basic needs of the community, including rehabilitation of major repatriation routes, shelter, repair and reconstruction of shallow wells, educational and health services, irrigation canals, income generation and related training activities. During the first seven months of 1995, UNHCR field offices implemented directly or through NGOs and local government bodies over 150 quick impact projects in all the major regions of Afghanistan.

28. Parallel with these activities, UNHCR collaborated with other United Nations agencies in funding several rural and urban schemes, which reinforce the link between the short-term quick impact projects and the medium-term activities of these agencies. Similarly, memoranda of understanding are being concluded between UNHCR and UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and FAO to institutionalize the link between the respective activities of the agencies and eventually prepare the ground for phasing out the reintegration projects in favour of longer-term development schemes.

2. Urban rehabilitation and infrastructure

29. At the end of 1994, it was estimated that half a million houses in the urban areas of Afghanistan needed to be rebuilt. The main aim of the UNDP-financed United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) urban rehabilitation project is to support the indigenous process of repair, focusing on water supply, sanitation, interim housing repairs and building materials. The project also aims to develop expertise in the Government to develop longer-

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term settlement support programmes. The programme has two components. The neighbourhood action programme aims to support small-scale local initiatives in physical and social living conditions with the participation of representatives of urban communities. The municipal infrastructure programme supports Afghan technical institutions in assessing, managing and implementing high-priority infrastructure repairs.

30. Besides UNDP and UNCHS, UNICEF and WHO have been assisting the rehabilitation and repair of water supply systems to ensure the availability of safe drinking water in urban areas. In common with the United Nations system's programme in the rural sector, the key element in both components of the urban programme is consultation with local communities to determine priorities and monitor programme implementation. Whilst programmes have been operational in Herat and Mazar-i-Sharif for several years, it was possible to begin work in Kabul during the first half of 1995 with the improvement of the security situation there. Many of the labour-intensive urban rehabilitation interventions were carried out with the assistance of WFP food-for-work programmes.

31. Some of the main results of recent United Nations system assistance in this area are:

(a) In the past year, 10,000 families have rebuilt their houses with support from UNCHS, funded by UNDP;

(b) In 1995, UNCHS is supplying 280 shallow well pumps to bring safer water to 13,800 urban families in three cities;

(c) Earlier this year, a project funded by several United Nations agencies and executed by WHO, in association with Kandahar Municipality and Water Development Authority, rehabilitated Kandahar's water supply system, bringing safer piped water to 300,000 people in the city. A high elevated water reservoir was also rehabilitated, with a 300-cubic metre capacity to keep the system under pressure. Employment opportunities were created for 150 people in the repair of 97 kilometres of pipe and the installation of 32 valves and manholes;

(d) UNICEF has repaired or installed 2,000 hand pumps in the last three years and repaired or built 20 deep wells, bringing safe drinking water to an estimated 900,000 people. UNICEF has also assisted in building 10,600 sanitary latrines, benefiting 48,000 people;

(e) Through labour intensive food-for-work projects, WFP supported urban sanitation projects in partnership with United Nations agencies and NGOs to improve sanitary conditions in urban areas in the country by removing over 100,000 cubic metres of garbage and solid waste from urban centres;

(f) WFP shelter reconstruction assistance between 1994 and mid-1995, in partnership with UNHCR, supported the reconstruction of 16,019 war-damaged houses on a self-help basis, benefiting 112,133 returnees and facilitating reintegration and resettlement.

3. Social sector

32. There is a strong linkage between the rehabilitation of rural economic production, urban rehabilitation and the revitalization of the education and health sectors. Communities will be economically and socially viable only if they have the basic social services and facilities. The United Nations system is undertaking programmes in health and education and the rehabilitation of the disabled, with particular emphasis on assisting the return of refugees. The success of the United Nations system's activities in the social sector depends on decentralized decision-making and implementation. UNICEF has set up five sub-offices and three field offices; the World Health Organization (WHO) operates six sub-offices and three field offices. The United Nations system's objectives in the social sectors are to develop and rehabilitate integrated primary health-care structures; combat major communicable diseases in order to reduce morbidity and mortality, especially among women and children; sensitize communities and raise awareness about disability issues, leading to the reintegration of the disabled into society; and improve basic education techniques and facilities through the provision of educational materials and introducing innovative techniques such as distance learning.

33. The United Nations system's activities in the social sector are progressively moving from emergency assistance towards action-oriented longer-term rehabilitation, based on the needs of the people concerned. The UNDP-financed comprehensive disabled Afghans programme, executed by the United Nations Office for Project Services, has trained 6,500 disabled Afghans and led to their reintegration into community life. In the health sector, needs and priorities are determined through regional health coordination committees, consisting of the Chief Medical Officer of each province, heads of departments, representatives of the local shuras and concerned United Nations agencies and NGOs. The aim is to coordinate all United Nations system and NGO inputs to ensure the smooth operation of an integrated primary health programme at the district level.

34. These activities also require close coordination of the activities of the United Nations system and other agencies. In collaboration with the United Nations Office for Project Services, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is introducing literacy and basic education materials to communities and women's training programmes. UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO and other agencies participate in distance learning through BBC radio, focusing on and building a community-centred self-reliant approach to rehabilitation. Many programmes use the skill, local knowledge and experience, mobility and capacity of NGOs as implementing partners.

35. Significant achievements by the United Nations system in the social sector are as follows:

(a) Training of health workers has formed a major part of WHO and UNICEF activities. WHO has provided technical expertise to regional health authorities in the management of a range of communicable diseases and has helped to restart the work of medical training institutions, while UNICEF focused its training activities on the treatment of diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections. Since 1993, WHO has trained 12,844 health workers (including doctors, midwives,

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technicians, health volunteers and local communities) in various aspects of disease control and prevention and supported the establishment of health posts in 4,500 villages;

(b) UNESCO, working with NGOs, has developed and tested model methodologies for non-formal literacy and management of primary schools in crisis; so far 20 trainers and 60 teachers from 30 schools have been trained;

(c) By the end of 1994, the United Nations Office for Project Services, with UNDP funding, had treated and trained almost 13,000 disabled people, ensuring their ability to remain in their communities as productive members, thereby benefiting their families, estimated to number more than 50,000 people;

(d) WFP, in 1994 to mid-1995, supported the rehabilitation of 101 schools with 42,420 pupils in two shifts, and supported vocational training and income-generating projects reaching over 3,000 youth, women and orphans in various trades.

B. Coordination of rehabilitation activities

36. Recognizing that the prevailing complex emergency in Afghanistan has already lasted more than 15 years and that many aspects of national government are still dysfunctional, the United Nations family has devoted considerable attention to ensuring that, wherever possible, the longer-term objective of sustainability is built into all programmes. In mid-1994, the Rehabilitation Steering Committee was created with four regional subcommittees based in Herat, Mazar-i-Sharif, Kandahar and Jalalabad, chaired by the United Nations Resident Coordinator and attended by all United Nations agencies operational in the country.

37. The Committee and its regional subcommittees, now including a fifth region of five provinces surrounding the capital, have met every quarter in the last year to review all work plans for the upcoming six-month period. In the first round of meetings, programmes with a total value of US\$ 26.6 million were adopted; in the second round, US\$ 53 million; and in the last round in June 1995, US\$ 63.5 million. Whilst these figures do not include pure relief assistance such as food aid for the internally displaced, or direct assistance to returning refugees, they do include programmes such as demining, which are part of the United Nations emergency humanitarian programme but which are also a prerequisite for rehabilitation activities. Detailed reports have been produced for the use of all operational partners, including local authorities. Staff of United Nations agencies have been trained in accessing the computer database.

C. Mobilizing additional resources for rehabilitation activities

38. While the rehabilitation activities of the United Nations system in Afghanistan have achieved significant results, it is widely recognized that they meet only a small proportion of the needs for assistance. United Nations system staff responsible for managing and implementing these projects have felt for some time that they could meet a greater proportion of the needs for

rehabilitation in Afghanistan if more funding became available. This was the subject of discussion in 1994 between UNDP and the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA), resulting in the latter's offer to host a meeting, organized by UNDP, to brief the donor community on the work of the United Nations system in rehabilitation in Afghanistan and the potential of these activities to serve as vehicles for intensified donor assistance.

39. This briefing of donors was held in Stockholm on 1 and 2 June 1995. It was attended by representatives of 24 NGOs and 20 organizations of the United Nations system. There were 131 participants, many of whom were eminent specialists and scholars. The main highlights of the discussions at the meeting were as follows:

(a) Afghanistan is 171st on the Human Development Index out of the 174 countries listed in the UNDP Human Development Report 1995. It is the only non-African country in the lowest 12 on the list. In terms of life expectancy, adult literacy, mean years of schooling, education attainment and real per capita gross national product, Afghanistan ranks among the lowest in the world. It has the highest infant and maternal mortality rates in the world;

(b) Most of the country is relatively peaceful. Donor projects of humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance are being carried out in all parts of the country and the country is capable of absorbing much more longer-term rehabilitation assistance in carefully selected areas;

(c) Afghanistan offers a prime example of the synergy that can exist between the United Nations and the NGO community, as a result of which each benefits from the comparative advantage of the other as donor as well as implementing agent;

(d) The meeting was thoroughly briefed by three panels, representing a wide cross-section of United Nations and NGO experience, on their efforts to promote a strategy for recovery in rural economic production, urban rehabilitation and the social sector. It noted that rural economic production was increasing from a very low base and that self-sufficiency in food production is achievable provided additional inputs to existing programmes are made available. It further noted that many people are migrating to urban areas, some of which are among the fastest growing in Asia. Programmes to address urgent needs, which include mines and rehabilitation of basic infrastructure, are being promoted on a neighbourhood basis with full community participation. However, proper planning is needed if future problems are to be avoided. In the social sector the urgent needs of women and children, the disabled, the destitute and the illiterate were noted as very high priorities;

(e) The transition from humanitarian assistance to rehabilitation and development is not a linear process. Humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation must be pursued in parallel, always keeping in mind the longer-term perspective for the development of the country;

(f) Sustainability of rehabilitation activities should be reinforced by using cost-effective methods, employing some cost recovery where possible, and incorporating adequate provision for human resource development;

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(g) The cost-effectiveness and impact of rehabilitation projects are increased when they are jointly conceived and implemented by the United Nations system, bilateral donors, NGOs and local communities. Several examples were cited in this respect, including the Expanded Programme of Immunization (EPI) and the seed and crop production and veterinary services programmes;

(h) Community participation and involvement in all aspects of the programme and project cycle are a prerequisite for successful rehabilitation;

(i) The significant need for infrastructure rehabilitation in urban areas was noted, as was the need for careful planning, to maximize the efficient use of resources and minimize damage to the environment;

(j) Peace in Afghanistan continues to be promoted and reinforced by the many rehabilitation activities that are under way in almost every part of the country. Further expansion and intensification of efforts to promote community-based rehabilitation activities need not and should not await a national political settlement; delay simply adds to the cost of rehabilitation;

(k) UNDP should now move forward from the base already established in the action plan for immediate rehabilitation and in the mechanisms being developed for coordination through the Rehabilitation Steering Committee to provide more systematic coordination of external assistance to Afghanistan.

D. Narcotics

40. For the second year, UNDCP was able to complete a detailed survey of poppy cultivation in eight opium-producing provinces of Afghanistan, the results of which are still being processed. Whilst Afghanistan continues to be one of the world's largest producers of illicit opium, preliminary indications from the latest survey confirm that a substantial reduction of opium production has taken place in Nangarhar province as a result of the intensive programme initiated by the Governor and Shura of Nangarhar towards the end of 1994. Mobilization of international assistance will be of critical importance in ensuring that those communities that have stopped production are given incentives not to return to poppy production next season.

41. The availability of UNDCP baseline data on opium production at the village level has enabled all donors to ensure that assistance does not benefit opium production and that opium producers do not receive assistance unless specific agreements are reached with local communities on firm commitments and achievements in the reduction of opium poppy cultivation. In mid-1995, UNDCP fielded a high-level mission to assess the impact of past programmes and recommend future policy. The results will be shared with donors towards the end of 1995.

E. The relationship between rehabilitation and emergency humanitarian assistance programmes

42. As in previous years, a large portion of United Nations assistance to Afghanistan during the past year has been devoted to humanitarian assistance. In parallel with its ongoing rehabilitation work, the United Nations development system has been able to support the work of the United Nations emergency humanitarian programme in meeting immediate life-sustaining needs. As reported last year, it has done this by providing a corps of specialized staff, with a well-established logistical support capacity to assist in the delivery of emergency relief, and at the same time to ensure that the design of the operation helps to generate maximum local participation and commitment, setting the stage for more sustainable rehabilitation and reconstruction in the future.

43. A number of rehabilitation programmes are closely linked with humanitarian activities, while being funded by UNDP. In the past year, this has been especially important in the urban sector as the improved security situation in the capital has allowed the return of the displaced to begin hand in hand with emergency shelter programmes, preparation and planning for longer-term urban rehabilitation. The UNCHS/Habitat programme has been instrumental in providing coordination on the ground among United Nations agencies and NGOs and in developing programmes for donor funding, addressing both humanitarian and rehabilitation issues. Similarly FAO-executed projects have continued to provide technical backstopping for emergency agricultural inputs and the United Nations Office for Project Services-executed rural rehabilitation programme has provided technical support for UNHCR programmes encouraging repatriation. United Nations Volunteers (UNVs) have continued to be provided as food aid monitors, voluntary repatriation monitors, logistics specialists and managers of emergency programmes.

IV. EMERGENCY HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

44. At its forty-ninth session, the General Assembly called upon the international community to respond to the consolidated appeal for emergency humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan, launched by the Secretary-General for the period from 1 October 1994 to 30 September 1995, having in mind the availability of the Afghanistan Emergency Trust Fund.

45. The consolidated appeal called for US\$ 106.4 million for assistance to internally displaced persons, mine clearance, voluntary repatriation, food aid, water supply and sanitation, social sector programmes and coordination and relief management support. As of 1 October 1995, a total of US\$ 79.3 million had been pledged/contributed to United Nations agencies and NGOs for the programmes contained in the appeal.

46. A new consolidated inter-agency appeal was launched on 9 October 1995 calling for US\$ 124 million to cover the period from 1 October 1995 to September 1996.

A. Implementation of humanitarian programmes

1. Internally displaced persons

Kabul

47. Fighting in Kabul continued intermittently until 20 March 1995, when the forces of President Rabbani gained control over the entire city. Since April 1995, large numbers of internally displaced persons from Jalalabad and refugees from Pakistan have returned to the capital. As of 1 August, a total of 150,000 persons had been recorded returning to the city, which remains without electricity and potable water. In addition, large parts of the city are inaccessible because of mines, and several neighbourhoods in the south and south-west have been completely destroyed.

48. The economic blockade, which had denied the citizens of Kabul access to emergency relief aid during much of 1994, was lifted in December 1994, to allow a United Nations convoy carrying 1,500 tons of food and other humanitarian aid to reach the city. With the complete lifting of the blockade in March 1995, the humanitarian activities of the United Nations agencies and NGOs were substantially expanded. Under the coordination of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan (UNOCHA), United Nations agencies were able to divert substantial resources to the priority task of immediate relief for the citizens of Kabul.

49. In the first half of 1995, WFP delivered a total of 5,000 tons of food for emergency programmes and food-for-work activities. During the same period UNICEF established 46 mini-health centres to provide treatment of respiratory infections, nutrition screening and food supplementation to 45,000 children; supported the repair of wells and delivered essential supplies and the fuel to public hospitals; WHO delivered medical supplies to the Ministry of Health; UNCHS managed a programme for waste disposal and rehabilitation of the city water supply and UNHCR provided emergency shelter to returning refugees and displaced persons. In order to combat the menace of mines covering an area of over 20 square kilometres within the city, one third of the capacity of UNOCHA's mine-clearance programme was transferred into the city as from April 1995.

Jalalabad

50. As a result of the continuous fighting in Kabul throughout most of 1994, about half a million persons had fled from their homes by the end of the year. Many of these persons continued to seek shelter at the Sar Shahi camp outside Jalalabad, which had been established in January 1994 by UNHCR. Responsibility for the management of the camp was taken over by UNOCHA in September 1994, but the rate of new arrivals was such that a new camp (New Hadda) had to be opened in October 1994. By the end of the year, internally displaced persons living in camps near Jalalabad totalled almost 300,000.

51. The United Nations agencies and NGOs have continued to provide all necessary emergency assistance, such as wheat flour and other food items, tents and household equipment, potable water, sanitation and medical services. As the situation in Kabul improved in April 1995, some families began to leave the

camps in Jalalabad and return to Kabul. In July, August and the first three weeks of September, WFP provided an incentive food package to those willing to deregister from the camps and return to Kabul.

2. Mine clearance

52. The UNOCHA mine clearance programme is in its sixth year of operation. The programme, implemented by six Afghan NGOs, one United Kingdom NGO and one Iranian agency, employs over 3,100 Afghan staff. UNOCHA requested US\$ 18 million for the mine clearance programme in the consolidated appeal, of which US\$ 17.4 million had been made available as at 30 September 1995. The programme consists of four major components: mine awareness, mine-clearance training, minefield survey and physical clearance of mines. Operations have been carried out in 22 of the 30 provinces of Afghanistan, as well as in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran (mine awareness for returning Afghan refugees).

53. The programme has to date identified 490 square kilometres of mined areas in Afghanistan. Of the 128 square kilometres categorized as high priority areas, the programme has so far cleared more than half (68 square kilometres). The end of 1997 has been set as a deadline for clearing all priority mined areas in the country, provided that sufficient funding is available.

3. Voluntary repatriation

54. During the first seven months of 1995, UNHCR assisted 71,483 Afghan refugees to repatriate from the Islamic Republic of Iran. The total observed border crossings from Pakistan stood at 79,901 persons, of whom 32,225 were assisted by UNHCR. In Herat, UNHCR, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), provided subsidized transport to 18,260 persons going to distant locations in Afghanistan. The balance of the Afghan refugee population in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan now stands at 1.5 million and 1.1 million respectively. UNHCR's quick impact projects favour urban and rural communities affected by the return of refugees and internally displaced persons, and include repair of major repatriation routes.

55. After six years of providing support to and facilitating the repatriation of Afghan refugees from the neighbouring countries, and recognizing a fundamental change of circumstances in Afghanistan since the transfer of power in Kabul in April 1992, UNHCR, in consultation with the Governments of the countries of asylum and the Afghan authorities, has established a three-year time-frame for completion of the process of repatriation. During this period, reintegration assistance to areas of high refugee return in Afghanistan will be increased in order to encourage repatriation and sustain reintegration. In the third year, UNHCR's returnee programme in Afghanistan would be phased down in favour of the development-oriented United Nations agencies and the status of the residual groups of Afghans remaining in countries of asylum would be determined.

56. As part of this strategy, an ad hoc intergovernmental consultative group, comprising the representatives of the Governments of Afghanistan, the Islamic

Republic of Iran and Pakistan as well as UNHCR, has been established to advocate increased rehabilitation assistance to all parts of Afghanistan, especially safe areas, and continued assistance to refugees in neighbouring host countries until the process of repatriation is completed. The work of this group is complemented by the activities of the two tripartite repatriation commissions, which coordinate policy issues and operational matters related to the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees.

57. Through its network of field offices in Afghanistan, UNHCR is monitoring the return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their places of origin. On an exceptional basis, one group of internally displaced persons in Mazar-i-Sharif was provided with cash grants to facilitate their return to Ghor province. UNHCR has requested the authorities in Kabul to promulgate a general amnesty under which the basic rights of the returning refugees from abroad and internally displaced persons would be guaranteed. These rights include freedom of movement, re-acquisition of property, transfer of assets, fair treatment of foreign spouses in mixed marriages and freedom from harassment or legal process arising from non-criminal activities while in exile.

4. Food assistance

58. Food aid is provided by WFP in Afghanistan in the form of emergency assistance to internally displaced persons and vulnerable groups and support for people-oriented and community-based rehabilitation activities to facilitate reintegration and resettlement of Afghan refugees from Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Emergency food assistance is also provided to victims of landslides, earthquakes and floods in disaster and drought-prone areas of the country. Vulnerable groups such as widows, orphans and the urban poor are also provided with food aid.

59. Food-for-work projects through labour-intensive activities are supporting local communities to undertake productive public utility works that simultaneously provide employment opportunities for the hungry and poor and support poverty alleviation activities through local self-help initiatives. Through these activities, local communities are engaged in rehabilitation works on roads, small bridges and culverts, irrigation canals, water supply systems, agricultural lands and public buildings.

60. A total of 100,871 tons of food aid was distributed during 1994. From January to June 1995, WFP distributed 53,200 tons of food aid in Afghanistan for emergency relief assistance and rehabilitation activities, reaching an estimated 900,000 beneficiaries in all parts of the country. Of the total food aid distributed, 35 per cent is in support of rehabilitation activities, 35 per cent for care and maintenance of internally displaced persons and refugees and 29 per cent for food-for-work-based rehabilitation programming. WFP expects to utilize close to 100,000 tons of food aid during the second half of 1995, of which 70 per cent would be devoted to food-for-work-based rehabilitation programmes.

5. Health, water supply and sanitation

61. WHO and UNICEF, in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health, NGOs and local communities, have taken a range of initiatives to help to restore basic health services on an emergency basis. Most notably the agencies joined together in November 1994 and April to June 1995 to carry out three rounds of a mass immunization campaign. Nearly 2.4 million children under 5 were immunized against polio, and over 800,000 under 2 against measles; over 700,000 women of child-bearing age were immunized against tetanus. The campaign was carried out with the assistance of 13,000 people, including vaccinators, volunteers, teachers and community leaders. Following an appeal from the United Nations, all warring factions observed a cease-fire for the first week of the campaign in November 1994. In practice, the cease-fire stayed in place for almost two months.

62. WHO and UNICEF have also provided substantial quantities of medical supplies and equipment to health facilities in all parts of the country. UNICEF, in collaboration with WFP, has supported feeding programmes for malnourished children, particularly in Kabul and in the camps for internally displaced persons.

6. Agriculture

63. The rehabilitation of agriculture continued to facilitate the resettlement of returning refugees and displaced persons. Emphasis was given to restoration of the basic productive capacity in agriculture. FAO provided high quality seed of improved varieties and fertilizer, fruit trees and root stock, assisted in introducing judicious use of pesticide through training and extension activities, trained basic veterinary workers and organized vaccination campaigns against infectious diseases of animals.

7. Emergency support for social programmes

64. UNICEF distributed education kits in most regions, including Kabul, where schools reopened after the fighting. UNICEF and UNESCO supplied teaching materials, including kits for their production, to more than 15,000 classrooms, benefiting over 150,000 students. A number of training activities and pilot projects aimed at improving access to education, particularly for girls, as well as projects targeting the most vulnerable women and children. Activities included income-generation, skills training, drop-in centres and emergency shelters for destitute children and support for women's organizations.

B. Coordination and security

65. Throughout the period under review, UNOCHA has continued to provide coordination and logistical support for humanitarian programmes under the direction of the United Nations Coordinator for the Emergency Humanitarian Programme for Afghanistan. In addition, UNOCHA has continued to exercise responsibility for essential common service projects, including the provision of

aircraft services and a radio network, to support the activities of United Nations agencies and NGOs participating in the humanitarian programme.

66. In December 1994 United Nations international staff returned to Kabul on a continuous rotating basis and have been present ever since, except for a few days in March 1995 during a period of intensive fighting. However, it has still not been possible to resume the full international presence and to lift the evacuation status declared in August 1992. In other parts of the country, security concerns have rarely impeded the work of the United Nations agencies and international staff were present on a more or less continuous basis in Herat, Jalalabad, Kandahar and Mazar-i-Sharif. Regular missions were undertaken to other areas, as required. Recent events in Herat did not disrupt the humanitarian activities in the region.

V. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

67. The United Nations efforts to achieve peace and national reconciliation in Afghanistan have reached another critical juncture. The dramatic events during last February and March, and again in September, have led to another reconfiguration of the political forces in the country. This creates the possibility of further conflict but may also present new opportunities for peace.

68. Continued instability in Afghanistan would have grave consequences not only for the Afghans themselves but also for the whole region. Afghanistan is the place where most of the ethnic fault lines in Central Asia converge. The war there has for years had negative repercussions on neighbouring States.

69. Afghanistan as a whole experienced a period of relative peace between April and August 1995, permitting a significant number of refugees and internally displaced persons to return to their homes. The Afghan people gave every indication of wishing to see this peace become a permanent condition. Their yearning for lasting peace and stability, which have been denied them for too long, deserves the active support of the international community.

70. The Afghan people and their leaders remain strongly opposed to foreign interference in the internal affairs of their country and would like all interested parties to work with the United Nations to try to ensure that such interference ceases. Many Afghans believe that, if it did, they could resolve their differences and achieve a lasting settlement and durable peace. I urge the international community to reassert its insistence that all States abstain from interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

71. In the various peace plans that have been put forward, there is a significant common point. They all propose the establishment of a representative preparatory body to initiate a political process leading towards a lasting settlement. Differences remain on the modalities, but there seems to be a general consensus that such a preparatory mechanism is necessary if Afghanistan is to take the first crucial step out of the current impasse. I still believe that the United Nations should continue to help the Afghan people to take this step. This is an approach on which there is a general agreement,

in varying degrees, among the Afghan leaders whom the Head of the Special Mission has consulted during his recent rounds of consultations. I accordingly decided that he should return to the region in September and redouble his efforts to assist the Afghans in arriving at such an arrangement. I further decided to strengthen the Special Mission by stationing four additional Political Affairs Officers in four major cities in Afghanistan, who will be able to ensure continuity of information exchange and consultation between the Special Mission and the political leaders based in those cities.

72. The issue of former President Najibullah remains a matter of great concern to me. Over three years have elapsed since he was given refuge in the compound of the Office of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Pakistan. I find it deeply regrettable that, despite my repeated pleas to the authorities in Kabul, Mr. Najibullah and his companions have still not been able to leave Afghanistan for another country of their choice. His safe departure would enable the United Nations to discharge its obligation to a former President who cooperated admirably with the Organization in facilitating the peaceful transfer of power in April 1992.

73. Being of the view that the United Nations peacemaking activities in Afghanistan should be maintained, I seek the General Assembly's endorsement of the approach set out in the present report. In the current situation, the will of the United Nations may be firm but its means are limited. All possible means of cooperation with the regional States and OIC will be seriously pursued. I appeal to all other Member States for their continued support for these peace efforts as well as for the critically important humanitarian and rehabilitation activities in Afghanistan which are described in detail in sections III and IV of the present report.

Notes

1/ Mr. Sattar Sirat, Mr. Sultan Mahmoud Ghazi, Mr. Enyatollah Eblagh (who withdrew shortly afterwards for personal reasons) and Mr. Abdul Ahad Karzai.



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Security Council

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8 November 1995

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fiftieth session
Agenda items 55 and 112
QUESTION OF CYPRUS
HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fiftieth year

Letter dated 7 November 1995 from the Permanent Representative of
Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

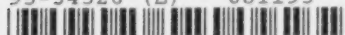
Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to bring to your attention further acts of vandalism and desecration against holy places of worship in the northern part of Cyprus, which is under Turkish occupation.

In a letter dated 29 August 1995, we brought to your attention acts of desecration committed against the Churches of Our Saviour in Akanthou and of Panayia Evangelistria in Karavas. Attention was also drawn to the vandalism at the cemeteries of the Church of Our Saviour in Akanthou and at the occupation village of Gypsou. New information has been brought to our attention indicating that the desecration and vandalism of holy places of worship in the occupied part of Cyprus continues.

The Church of Agios Georgios in the occupied village of Voucolida has been taken over by a family of illegal settlers from mainland Turkey who use the church as their residence.

The Church of Agios Haralambos and the cemetery of Neon Horion Kythreas have been vandalized.

Such acts of desecration and vandalism committed against churches and monasteries in the part of Cyprus occupied by Turkey since 1974 have been repeatedly brought to the attention of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) over the last 21 years since the Turkish invasion and occupation. Unfortunately, the protests of the Government of Cyprus have led to no firm action taken, aimed at stopping the systematic destruction, vandalism and desecration of the cultural heritage in the occupied part of Cyprus. As a result, the Turkification of the northern part of the island continues unabated and unchallenged under the very eyes of the United Nations.



A/50/738
S/1995/938
English
Page 2

As we noted in our letter to you of 29 August 1995, there should be ways and means by which the illegal authorities in the occupied part of Cyprus can be prevented, even at this late stage, from implementing their policies of erasing all traces of cultural heritage of a civilization of millennia. In that letter we further noted that the ethnic cleansing that Turkey pursued in 1974-1975 in the northern part of Cyprus by forcibly expelling 200,000 Greek Cypriots and turning them into refugees in their own country was the first step for a policy of the Turkification of the occupied part of the island. The second step is the destruction of the cultural heritage, a policy that is being implemented so far with impunity. It is time for the United Nations to intervene effectively, through UNFICYP, to stop the Turkification of the part of Cyprus occupied by Turkey by ensuring the protection of the cultural heritage going back to the dawn of history.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 55 and 112, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nicos AGATHOCLEOUS
Permanent Representative of
the Republic of Cyprus to
the United Nations



General Assembly
Security Council

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
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Agenda item 44
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fiftieth year

Letter dated 8 November 1995 from the Permanent Representative of
Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government and further to our earlier letters concerning repeated Israeli attacks on southern Lebanon and the western Bekaa, I have the honour to notify you of a series of such attacks that took place in the second half of October 1995.

17 October 1995

An Israeli force infiltrated the environs of Nabatiyah al-Fawqa and blew up a house belonging to a Lebanese.

18 October 1995

Israeli forces shelled the environs of Arabsalim, Jarju', Ayn Bu Siwar and Jba', as well as the Mlita hills and Jabal Safi. Israeli military aircraft overflew the western Bekaa, Tyre and Iqlim al-Tuffah areas.

19 October 1995

Israeli forces shelled the environs of Majdal Silm, Khirbat Silm and Tulin. Israeli military aircraft overflew Mashgharah, Maydun and Ayn al-Tinah.

21 October 1995

Israeli forces shelled the environs of Haddatha, Ayta al-Jabal, Tibnin, Bra'shit, Yatar and Kafr Rumman. Israeli forces carried out a heavy and intense bombardment of Jba' as a result of which some 30 per cent of its inhabitants took flight.



A/50/739
S/1995/939
English
Page 2

22 October 1995

Israeli forces shelled Yuhmur, Arnun, Arabsalim, Kafr Rumman, the area around the Habbush bridge, Zawtar al-Sharqiyah, Zawtar al-Gharbiyah, Mazra'at al-Hamra, Nabatiyah al-Fawqa, areas along the Litani river and Kafr Tibnit. One house was destroyed, and one Lebanese was injured.

23 October 1995

Israeli forces shelled the environs of Arabsalim, Jarju' and Ayn Bu Siwar. Israeli military aircraft overflew the area of Sidon and the camps nearby, as well as the Nabatiyah area.

24 October 1995

Israeli forces shelled the environs of Arabsalim, Jarju', Ayn Bu Siwar, the Mlita hills, Jabal Safi, Nabatiyah al-Fawqa, Zawtar al-Sharqiyah, Zawtar al-Gharbiyah, Kafr Rumman, Kafr Tibnit, Mazra'at al-Hamra, Habbush, Ayn al-Tinah and Maydun, as well as several neighbourhoods in Nabatiyah and the Marj Uyun highway. Israeli military aircraft overflew the Nabatiyah, Tyre and Iqlim al-Tuffah areas.

25 October 1995

Israeli forces shelled the environs of Arabsalim, Jarju' and Ayn Bu Siwar, as well as the Mlita hills and Jabal Safi. Israeli military aircraft overflew the area of Sidon and the camps nearby, as well as the Tyre, Damur and Nabatiyah areas.

26 October 1995

Israeli military aircraft overflew the town of Sidon and the camps nearby, as well as the Damur area.

28 October 1995

Israeli forces shelled the environs of Arabsalim, Jarju' and Ayn Bu Siwar, as well as the Mlita hills and Jabal Safi.

29 October 1995

Israeli forces shelled the hills to the south of Ayn al-Tinah and Maydun.

30 October 1995

Israeli forces shelled Kafra, Yatar and Haris and attempted to advance towards these towns.

31 October 1995

Israeli military aircraft made frequent overflights of the Iqlim al-Tuffah and Nabatiyah areas carrying out mock attacks.

/...

The Lebanese Government strongly condemns these repeated Israeli attacks, which have caused enormous damage to property. It further condemns in the strongest terms the arbitrary practices against civilians. Like previous attacks, this new series constitutes blatant aggression against the sovereignty and independence of Lebanon and represents another flagrant violation of international law and basic human rights.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 44, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Samir MOUBARAK
Permanent Representative



General Assembly

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Fiftieth session
Agenda item 95 (a)

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION: TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

Implementation of General Assembly resolution 49/99

Note by the Secretary-General

1. The General Assembly, in paragraph 15 of its resolution 49/99 of 19 December 1994 on international trade and development, requested the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to make proposals for translating into concrete action the commitments made at the Ministerial Meeting of the Trade Negotiations Committee of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, held at Marrakesh, Morocco, from 12 to 15 April 1994, regarding the least developed countries and net food-importing countries.

2. Pursuant to that request, and in the context of the work programme of the intergovernmental machinery of UNCTAD, the following progress has been made:

(a) As part of the preparations for the first session of the UNCTAD Ad Hoc Working Group on Trading Opportunities in the New International Trading Context, held from 9 to 13 October 1995, the UNCTAD secretariat organized at Geneva on 18 and 19 May 1995, an informal brainstorming meeting involving experts from international organizations, independent researchers, intergovernmental organizations and trade negotiators to explore appropriate policy options at the national and international levels for translating the commitments made at the Marrakesh Ministerial Meeting into concrete action. Given the informal character of the meeting, as agreed with the participants, no report was issued on its proceedings. However, the principal ideas emanating from the meeting were taken account of by the UNCTAD secretariat in formulating the recommendations contained in its report (TD/B/WG.8/3 and Add.1) to the above-mentioned Ad Hoc Working Group on Trading Opportunities in the New International Trading Context;



(b) That report, prepared to assist the Ad Hoc Working Group in the discharge of its mandate to analyse the modalities to give effect to the decisions on special provisions for the least developed countries as contained in the Final Act Embodying the Results of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations, 1/ identifies policy options in the areas of trade, finance and technical cooperation for translating into concrete action the Marrakesh commitments regarding the least developed countries and net food-importing countries;

(c) At its first session, the Ad Hoc Working Group had an in-depth discussion on these issues (see the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group (TD/B/WG.8/4)) and decided to seek to arrive at agreed conclusions on these and other matters at its final session, scheduled to be held from 4 to 8 December 1995;

(d) Lastly, it should be noted that, in accordance with the provisional agenda and annotations thereto established by the Trade and Development Board, the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, which is to take place from 27 April to 11 May 1996, at Johannesburg, South Africa, will also consider, inter alia, proposals for translating into concrete action the commitments made at the Ministerial Meeting in Marrakesh regarding the least developed countries and net food-importing countries.

Notes

1/ See Legal Instruments Embodying the Results of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations, done at Marrakesh on 15 April 1994 (GATT secretariat publication, Sales. No. GATT/1994-7), vol. 1.
